SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

The life history of *Mompha lacteella* (Steph.) (Lepidoptera: Momphidae). — The first mention of the life history of *Mompha lacteella* (Steph.) in British literature is in Meyrick (1927) which states that the larvae live in blotches in leaves of *Epilobium hirsutum* L. in August, but Wakely (1944) states that repeated search of this plant by himself and his friends in August failed to find any trace of the larvae. Emmet (1979) repeated Meyrick. Heckford (1986) reported that he found a larva in *Epilobium montanum* (L) on 13th April 1985 which emerged on 18th May and proved to be this species, but the larva was not seen outside the mine.

On 4th April 1988 Dr J. R. Langmaid, Col. D. H. Sterling and Messrs M. J. and P. H. Sterling visited Savernake Forest, Wiltshire VC 7 in an area where PHS had taken this species in July 1987 at MV. A number of mines were found in the leaves of young *Epilobium montanum* plants, but none were seen in other *Epilobium* species. The larvae had a black head, trisected by a V-shaped fissure with the apex posteriorly, and bisected by a median pale line. Thoracic legs were dark grey and the bodies varied from purplish brown to yellowish pink, paler and slightly yellow tinged at the segments and laterally. The anal plate was dark grey irregularly mottled black. The larvae appeared mature and all made dull cream coloured cocoons and pupated within 2 weeks of capture. Those kept outside emerged between 8 and 15 May, but they were kept in a plastic-covered seed tray, so would probably have emerged slightly later in the open. All were *Mompha lacteella.*

The normal cycle therefore appears to be

O 8 On *Epilobium montanum* and possibly other *Epilobium* species.
L 9–4 In a mine.
P 4–5 In a dull cream cocoon
I 5–7

—Col. D. H. Sterling, 'Tangmere', 2 Hampton Lane, Winchester, Hants. SO22 5LF.

References

Emmet, A. M. 1979. *A field guide to the smaller British lepidoptera*, London: BENHS.
Heckford, R. J. 1986. Larvae of *Mompha lacteella* on *Epilobium montanum* in April. *Entermologist's Rec. J. Var.* **98**: 121–122.
Meyrick, E. 1927. *A revised handbook of British Lepidoptera.*
Wakely, S. 1944. Notes on the genus *Mompha*. Paper read to SLENHS 11 Nov. 1944 and printed in Illustrated Papers on British Microlepidoptera, BENHS 1978.

Butterfly resting positions: *Pieris* up, *Vanessa* down. — While the interesting article by M. W. F. Tweedie in the April issue of this journal draws attention to the various attitudes adopted by the wings of Lepidoptera when at rest, it does not mention the *positions* they take up and the differences between some pierids and nymphalids was very strikingly brought to my attention recently when I had occasion to have several hundred butterflies of more than one species in the same cage for mating and oviposition purposes.

The species in question were *Pieris brassicae* L., *Vanessa atalanta* L. and *Cynthia cardui* L. The *brassicae* were always present in the cage, but the two nymphalids were in with them at different times and not together. When the butterflies roosted for the night it was very striking that when on a vertical surface all the *brassicae* were sitting head up and all the *atalanta*, or all the *cardui*, were resting head down. At least 60% would be vertical and the remaining 40% rarely more than 10° off the vertical. During the day, while the butterflies were active and particularly when the two

nymphalid species were sunning themselves (an activity not indulged in by the *brassicae*), then they retained a head-up posture. On a horizontal surface, as the roof, positioning in all three species tended to be random, although small groups would form all facing in the same direction. It would be interesting to learn of the resting position of other Nymphalidae as well as other families and one does wonder if the two different postures adopted by such different species has some selective advantage, or even if it is due to the nymphalids only having four usable legs to the pierid's six — Brian O. C. Gardiner, 18 Chesterton Hall Crescent, Cambridge CB4 1AP.

Reference

Tweedie, M. W. F. 1988. Resting posture in the Lepidoptera. *Br. J. Ent. nat. Hist.* **1**: 1–8.

Blair's Shoulder Knot *Lithophane leautieri* Bours. in West Wales. — On the 9.x.87 a single *L. leautieri* was trapped in a u.v. tube moth trap at Salem, Penrhyncoch, Dyfed (SN669843), about 8 km from the coast at Aberystwyth. As far as I can ascertain, this is the first record from West Wales of this recently arrived species, with the nearest records from Monmouthshire (Howlett & Majerus, 1987).

Since only a single individual was trapped, one may only speculate whether it was a migrant or of local origin. Other migrants trapped at the same site in 1987 included single *Rhodometra sacraria* L. on 8.ix and *Mythimna vitellina* Hübn. on 17.ix, the latter only the second record for Ceredigion (Cardiganshire). However there is also plenty of cypress present at Salem. — P. R. Holmes, Nature Conservancy Council, Plas Gogerddan, Penrhyncoch, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3EE.

Reference

Howlett, R. & Majerus, M. 1987. The spread of Blair's Shoulder Knot (*Lithophane leautieri hesperica* Bour.) (Lep: Noctuidae). *Entomologist's Rec. J. Var.* **99**: 258–260.

***Dorcatoma chrysomelina* Sturm (Coleoptera: Anobiidae) and *Xylophagus ater* Meig. (Diptera: Xylophagidae) new to Pembrokeshire.** — A brief visit to Lawrenny Wood (SN 013075) in Pembrokeshire on 2.vii.1988 produced some interesting deadwood associated insects, two of which — *Dorcatoma chrysomelina* and *Xylophagus ater* — appear to be new to the county. Lawrenny Wood is an area of sessile oak woodland lying along the eastern side of the Daugleddau Estuary, mostly of abandoned coppice form, but with mature standards where it swings into the creek of Garron Pill. This latter section produced all the records of interest.

A single dead *D. chrysomelina* was found amongst exposed red rot in a living oak. Larvae of *X. ater* were found beneath loose bark on a dead oak bough, together with larvae of *Pediacus dermestoides* (F.) (Coleoptera: Cucujidae). No records for *X. ater* in Pembrokeshire were found when reviewing its British distribution (see Clements and Alexander, 1987). Lawrenny remains the only county locality for *P. dermestoides* to my knowledge, having been discovered here in 1964 (Angus, 1965). — K.N.A. Alexander, 22 Cecily Hill, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 2EF.

References

Angus, R.B. 1965. Some new records of Coleoptera from Pembrokeshire. *Entomologist's mon. Mag.* **101:** 12–13.

Clements, D.K. & Alexander, K.N.A. 1987. The distribution of the fly *Xylophagus ater* Meigen (Diptera: Xylophagidae) in the British Isles with some notes on its biology. *Proc. Trans. Br. ent. nat. Hist. Soc.* **20:** 141–146.